



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **THE CENTERS, INC. CELEBRATES \$1.6 MILLION EXPANSION WITH DEDICATION AND RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONY**

OCALA, FL, September 28, 2004 — The doors are opening for underserved residents of Marion and Citrus counties to gain increased access to medical care thanks to funding provided by USDA Rural Development. Today's ribbon cutting/dedication ceremony at The Centers, Inc., officially opens a much anticipated addition to the crisis stabilization unit, made possible by a \$1,610,700 low interest Community Facilities loan from USDA Rural Development.

The Centers Inc. is a private non-profit agency, providing over 25 years of services to the Marion and Citrus County communities in both mental health and substance abuse treatment for adults and children through assessment, out patient, in patient, residential and case management services. The center currently offers 40 crisis stabilization and detoxification beds, however, none of the beds meet State Chapter 395 to serve Medicare A patients. The Center sends more than 50 Medicare A patients per month to a facility located 30 miles away in Citrus County for psychiatric hospitalization. The 6,637 square foot expansion will enable The Centers, Inc. staff to better serve an increased number of patients through the addition of 15 new resident beds, the conversion of 15 existing beds to Medicare beds and the addition of a new nurse's station.

The quality of life in communities is greatly dependent upon the access residents have to healthcare, including mental health services. Rural communities have significant health related needs and problems, but substantially fewer health resources. USDA Rural Development is committed to improving access to health care for medically under-served communities. At today's ceremony, Charles W. Clemons, Sr., State Director USDA Rural Development, said, "This facility will address the issues associated with limited access to mental health care, especially to our most vulnerable families, the elderly and the disabled. Accessible healthcare is critical in order for rural communities to survive and prosper. USDA Rural Development is proud to support this important project."

USDA Rural Development serves as the lead Federal entity for rural development needs and administers financial and technical assistance through three agencies: Rural Housing Service, Rural Business-Cooperative Service and Rural Utilities Service. Further information on USDA Rural Development can be obtained by contacting any USDA Service Center or by visiting USDA's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/fl>

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